

CLAIMS

1. A method for performing distributed text-to-speech synthesis by a telephone network coupled to a first telephone subscriber unit and a second telephone subscriber unit, the first telephone subscriber unit having a first telephone number and associated with a first party by the telephone network, and the second telephone subscriber unit having a second telephone number and associated with a second party by the telephone network, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a telephone call from the first telephone subscriber unit to the telephone network over a first communication channel responsive to the first telephone subscriber unit originating the telephone call to the second telephone subscriber unit through the telephone network;

determining that the second party subscribes to a speech-based caller identification service provided by the telephone network responsive to the step of receiving the telephone call;

retrieving text information, representing caller identification information of the first party, from a database stored in a network memory device responsive to the step of determining;

converting the text information into symbols, representing the caller identification information of the first party, responsive to the step of retrieving;

encoding the symbols to form a data stream representing the caller identification information of the first party;

opening a second communication channel between the telephone network and the second telephone subscriber unit responsive to the step of encoding; and

sending the data stream from the telephone network to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel responsive to the step of opening.

2. A method according to claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

receiving a request from the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel that the telephone network route the telephone call to the second telephone subscriber unit responsive to the step of sending the data stream; and

routing the telephone call through the telephone network from the first telephone subscriber over the first communication channel unit to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel responsive to the step of receiving the request.

3. A method according to claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

5 placing the first telephone subscriber unit on hold responsive to the step of determining;
 sending a ringing signal to the first telephone subscriber unit over the first
 communication channel responsive to the step of placing, wherein the step of retrieving the text
 information is performed responsive to the step of sending the ringing signal;

10 receiving a request from the second telephone subscriber unit over the second
 communication channel that the telephone network route the telephone call to the second
 telephone subscriber unit;

stopping the sending of the ringing signal to the first telephone subscriber unit over the
 first communication channel responsive to the step of receiving the request;

15 taking the first telephone subscriber unit off hold responsive to the step of stopping; and
 routing the telephone call through the telephone network from the first telephone
 subscriber unit over the first communication channel to the second telephone subscriber unit
 over the second communication channel responsive to the step of taking the first telephone
 subscriber unit off hold.

20 4. A method according to claim 1 further comprising the step of:

determining that the transmission of the data stream from the telephone network to the
 second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel is successful
 responsive the step of sending the data stream and responsive to a response from the second
 telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel that the transmission of the
 25 data stream from the telephone network to the second telephone subscriber unit is successful,
 wherein the step of receiving the request is responsive to the step of determining that the
 transmission of the data stream from the telephone network to the second telephone subscriber
 unit over the second communication channel is successful.

30 5. A method according to claim 1 further comprising the step of:

sending a ringing signal to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second
 communication channel responsive the step of sending the data stream, wherein the step of
 receiving the request is responsive to the step of sending the ringing signal.

6. A method according to claim 1 further comprising the step of:
converting the text information from a first data format to a second data format suitable for text-to-speech synthesis prior to the step of converting the text information into symbols.

7. A method according to claim 1 wherein the symbols further comprise phonemic and prosodic information.

8. A method according to claim 1 wherein the symbols further comprise spectral and prosodic feature parameters.

9. A method for performing distributed text-to-speech synthesis by a telephone network coupled to a first telephone subscriber unit and a second telephone subscriber unit, the first telephone subscriber unit having a first telephone number and associated with a first party by the telephone network, and the second telephone subscriber unit having a second telephone number and associated with a second party by the telephone network, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a telephone call from the first telephone subscriber unit to the telephone network over a first communication channel responsive to the first telephone subscriber unit originating the telephone call to the second telephone subscriber unit through the telephone network;

determining that the second party subscribes to a speech-based caller identification service provided by the telephone network responsive to the step of receiving the telephone call;

placing the first telephone subscriber unit on hold responsive to the step of determining;

sending a ringing signal to the first telephone subscriber unit over the first communication channel responsive to the step of placing;

retrieving text information, representing caller identification information of the first party, from a database stored in a network memory device responsive to the step of determining;

converting the text information into symbols, representing the caller identification information of the first party, responsive to the step of retrieving;

encoding the symbols to form a data stream representing the caller identification information of the first party;

opening a second communication channel between the telephone network and the second telephone subscriber unit responsive to the step of encoding;

sending the data stream from the telephone network to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel responsive to the step of opening;

5 sending a ringing signal to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel responsive to the step of sending the data stream;

receiving a request from the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel that the telephone network route the telephone call to the second telephone subscriber unit responsive to the step of sending the ringing signal to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel;

stopping the sending of the ringing signal to the first telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel responsive to the step of receiving the request;

taking the first telephone subscriber unit off hold responsive to the step of stopping; and

routing the telephone call through the telephone network from the first telephone subscriber unit over the first communication channel to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel responsive to the step of taking the first telephone subscriber unit off hold.

10. A method according to claim 9 further comprising the steps of:

20 determining that the transmission of the data stream from the telephone network to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel is successful responsive the step of sending the data stream and responsive to a response from the second telephone subscriber unit that the transmission of the data stream from the telephone network to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel is successful, wherein the step of sending the ringing signal is responsive to the step of determining that the transmission of the data stream from the telephone network to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel is successful.

11. A method according to claim 9 wherein the symbols further comprise phonemic and prosodic information.

12. A method according to claim 9 wherein the symbols further comprise spectral and prosodic feature parameters.

13. A method according to claim 9 further comprising the step of:
converting the text information from a first data format to a second data format suitable for text-to-speech synthesis prior to the step of converting the text information into symbols.

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14. A method for performing distributed text-to-speech synthesis by a telephone network coupled to a first telephone subscriber unit and a second telephone subscriber unit, the first telephone subscriber unit having a first telephone number and associated with a first party by the telephone network, and the second telephone subscriber unit having a second telephone number and associated with a second party by the telephone network, the method comprising the steps of:

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receiving a telephone call from the first telephone subscriber unit to the telephone network over a first communication channel responsive to the first telephone subscriber unit originating the telephone call to the second telephone subscriber unit through the telephone network;

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determining that the second party subscribes to a speech-based caller identification service provided by the telephone network responsive to the step of receiving the telephone call;

placing the first telephone subscriber unit on hold responsive to the step of determining;

sending a ringing signal to the first telephone subscriber unit over the first communication channel responsive to the step of placing;

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retrieving text information, representing caller identification information of the first party, from a database stored in a network memory device responsive to the step of determining;

converting the text information into symbols, representing the caller identification information of the first party, responsive to the step of retrieving;

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encoding the symbols to form a data stream representing the caller identification information of the first party;

opening a second communication channel between the telephone network and the second telephone subscriber unit responsive to the step of encoding;

sending the data stream from the telephone network to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel responsive to the step of opening;

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determining that the transmission of the data stream from the telephone network to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel is successful responsive the step of sending the data stream and responsive to a response from the second

telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel that the transmission of the data stream from the telephone network to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel is successful;

5 sending a ringing signal to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel responsive to the step of determining that the transmission of the data stream over the second communication channel is successful;

10 receiving a request from the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel that the telephone network route the telephone call to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel responsive to the step of sending the ringing signal to the second telephone subscriber unit;

stopping the sending of the ringing signal to the first telephone subscriber unit over the first communication channel responsive to the step of receiving the request;

taking the first telephone subscriber unit off hold responsive to the step of stopping; and

15 routing the telephone call through the telephone network from the first telephone subscriber unit over the first communication channel to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel responsive to the step of taking the first telephone subscriber unit off hold.

20 15. A method according to claim 14 wherein the symbols further comprise phonemic and prosodic information.

16. A method according to claim 14 wherein the symbols further comprise spectral and prosodic feature parameters.

25 17. A method according to claim 14 further comprising the step of:
converting the text information from a first data format to a second data format suitable for text-to-speech synthesis prior to the step of converting the text information into symbols.

18. A method for performing distributed text-to-speech synthesis by a second telephone subscriber unit, a telephone network being coupled to a first telephone subscriber unit and the second telephone subscriber unit, the first telephone subscriber unit having a first telephone number and associated with a first party by the telephone network, and the second telephone subscriber unit having a second telephone number and associated with a second party by the telephone network, the method comprising the steps of:

detecting that the telephone network opened a second communication channel between the telephone network and the second telephone subscriber unit responsive to a step of opening a first communication channel between a first telephone subscriber unit and the telephone network as performed by the telephone network;

receiving a data stream, representing caller identification information of the first party, from the telephone network over the second communication channel responsive to a step of sending the data stream to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel as performed by the telephone network;

decoding the data stream to form decoded symbols, representing the caller identification information of the first party, responsive to the step of receiving the data stream;

converting the decoded symbols to speech, representing the caller identification information of the first party, responsive to the step of decoding; and

generating the speech responsive to the step of converting the decoded symbols to speech to permit the second party associated with the second telephone subscriber unit to listen to the speech to identify an identity of first party associated with the first telephone subscriber unit prior to accepting a telephone call from the first telephone subscriber unit.

19. A method according to claim 18 further comprising the steps of:

determining that the transmission of the data stream over the second communication channel is successful responsive to the step of receiving the data stream; and

responding to the telephone network that the transmission of the data stream over the second communication channel is successful responsive to the step of determining that the transmission of the data stream over the second communication channel is successful, wherein the step of decoding the data stream is responsive to the step of responding.

20. A method according to claim 18 further comprising the step of:

storing the speech in a subscriber unit memory device responsive to the step of converting the decoded symbols.

21. A method according to claim 18 further comprising the steps of:

5 receiving a ringing signal from the telephone network over the second communication channel responsive to the step of receiving the data stream; and

generating the ringing signal responsive to the step of receiving the ringing signal to alert the second party to an availability of the telephone call originated by the first telephone subscriber unit to the second telephone subscriber unit through the telephone network;

22. A method according to claim 18 further comprising the steps of:

receiving a request from the second party to accept the telephone call over the second communication channel responsive to the step of generating the speech;

15 requesting that the telephone network route the telephone call to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel responsive to the step of receiving the request from the second party to accept the telephone call over the second communication channel; and

20 receiving the telephone call over the second communication channel responsive to the step of requesting and responsive to the telephone network routing the telephone call to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel.

23. A method according to claim 18 wherein the decoded symbols are represented by phonemic and prosodic information.

25 24. A method according to claim 18 wherein the decoded symbols are represented by spectral and prosodic feature parameters.

25. A method for performing distributed text-to-speech synthesis by a second telephone subscriber unit, a telephone network being coupled to a first telephone subscriber unit and the second telephone subscriber unit, the first telephone subscriber unit having a first telephone number and associated with a first party by the telephone network, and the second telephone subscriber unit having a second telephone number and associated with a second party by the telephone network, the method comprising the steps of:

detecting that the telephone network opened a second communication channel between the telephone network and the second telephone subscriber unit responsive to a step of opening a first communication channel between a first telephone subscriber unit and the telephone network as performed by the telephone network;

receiving a data stream, representing caller identification information of the first party, from the telephone network over the second communication channel responsive to a step of sending the data stream to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel as performed by the telephone network;

decoding the data stream to form decoded symbols, representing the caller identification information of the first party, responsive to the step of receiving the data stream;

converting the decoded symbols to speech, representing the caller identification information of the first party, responsive to the step of decoding;

receiving a ringing signal from the telephone network over the second communication channel responsive to the step of receiving the data stream;

generating the ringing signal responsive to the step of receiving the ringing signal to alert the second party to an availability of a telephone call originated by the first telephone subscriber unit to the second telephone subscriber unit through the telephone network;

generating the speech responsive to the step of converting the decoded symbols to speech and responsive to the step of generating the ringing signal to permit the second party associated with the second telephone subscriber unit to listen to the speech to identify an identity of first party associated with the first telephone subscriber unit prior to accepting the telephone call;

receiving a request from the second party to accept the telephone call over the second communication channel responsive to the step of generating the speech;

requesting that the telephone network route the telephone call to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel responsive to the step of receiving the

request from the second party to accept the telephone call over the second communication channel; and

receiving the telephone call over the second communication channel responsive to the step of requesting and responsive to the telephone network routing the telephone call to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel.

26. A method according to claim 25 further comprising the steps of:

determining that the transmission of the data stream over the second communication channel is successful responsive to the step of receiving the data stream; and

responding to the telephone network that the transmission of the data stream over the second communication channel is successful responsive to the step of determining that the transmission of the data stream over the second communication channel is successful, wherein the step of decoding the data stream is responsive to the step of responding.

27. A method according to claim 25 further comprising the step of:

storing the speech in a subscriber unit memory device responsive to the step of converting the decoded symbols.

28. A method according to claim 25 wherein the decoded symbols are represented by phonemic and prosodic information.

29. A method according to claim 26 wherein the decoded symbols are represented by spectral and prosodic feature parameters.

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30 A method for performing distributed text-to-speech synthesis by a second telephone subscriber unit, a telephone network being coupled to a first telephone subscriber unit and the second telephone subscriber unit, the first telephone subscriber unit having a first telephone number and associated with a first party by the telephone network, and the second telephone subscriber unit having a second telephone number and associated with a second party by the telephone network, the method comprising the steps of:

5 detecting that the telephone network opened a second communication channel between the telephone network and the second telephone subscriber unit responsive to a step of opening a first communication channel between a first telephone subscriber unit and the telephone network as performed by the telephone network;

10 receiving a data stream, representing caller identification information of the first party, from the telephone network over the second communication channel responsive to a step of sending the data stream to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel as performed by the telephone network;

15 decoding the data stream to form decoded symbols, representing the caller identification information of the first party, responsive to the step of receiving the data stream;

determining that the transmission of the data stream over the second communication channel is successful responsive to the step of receiving the data stream; and

20 responding to the telephone network that the transmission of the data stream over the second communication channel is successful responsive to the step of determining that the transmission of the data stream over the second communication channel is successful;

converting the decoded symbols to speech, representing the caller identification information of the first party, responsive to the step of decoding;

25 storing the speech in a subscriber unit memory device responsive to the step of converting the decoded symbols;

receiving a ringing signal from the telephone network over the second communication channel responsive to the step of responding;

30 generating the ringing signal responsive to the step of receiving the ringing signal to alert the second party to an availability of a telephone call originated by the first telephone subscriber unit to the second telephone subscriber unit through the telephone network;

generating the speech responsive to the step of converting the decoded symbols to speech and responsive to the step of generating the ringing signal to permit the second party associated with the second telephone subscriber unit to listen to the speech to identify an

identity of first party associated with the first telephone subscriber unit prior to accepting the telephone call;

receiving a request from the second party to accept the telephone call over the second communication channel responsive to the step of generating the speech;

5 requesting that the telephone network route the telephone call to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel responsive to the step of receiving the request from the second party to accept the telephone call over the second communication channel; and

10 receiving the telephone call over the second communication channel responsive to the step of requesting and responsive to the telephone network routing the telephone call to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel.

31. A method according to claim 30 wherein the decoded symbols are represented by phonemic and prosodic information.

15 32. A method according to claim 30 wherein the decoded symbols are represented by spectral and prosodic feature parameters.

20 33. A method for performing distributed text-to-speech synthesis in a telecommunications system including a first telephone subscriber unit, a second telephone subscriber unit, and a telephone network, the method comprising the steps of:

performing, by the first telephone subscriber unit having a first telephone number and associated with a first party by the telephone network, the steps of:

25 originating a telephone call to the second telephone subscriber unit, having a second telephone number and associated with a second party by the telephone network, over a first communication channel between the first telephone subscriber unit and the telephone network;

30 receiving a ringing signal from the telephone network over the first communication channel responsive to a step of being placed on hold performed by the telephone network;

engaging in the telephone call with the second telephone subscriber unit responsive to a step of being taken off hold performed by the telephone network;

performing, by the telephone network coupled to the first telephone unit and the second telephone unit, the steps of:

receiving the telephone call from the first telephone subscriber unit over the first communication channel responsive to the step of originating the telephone call;

5 determining that the second party subscribes to a speech-based caller identification service provided by the telephone network responsive to the step of receiving the telephone call;

placing the first telephone subscriber unit on hold responsive to the step of determining;

10 sending a ringing signal to the first telephone subscriber unit over the first communication channel responsive to the step of placing;

retrieving text information, representing caller identification information of the first party, from a database stored in a network memory device responsive to the step of determining;

15 converting the text information into symbols, representing the caller identification information of the first party, responsive to the step of retrieving;

encoding the symbols to form a data stream representing the caller identification information of the first party;

20 opening a second communication channel between the telephone network and the second telephone subscriber unit responsive to the step of encoding;

sending the data stream from the telephone network to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel responsive to the step of opening;

25 determining that the transmission of the data stream from the telephone network to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel is successful responsive the step of sending the data stream and responsive to a response from the second telephone subscriber unit;

sending a ringing signal to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel responsive to the step of determining that the transmission of the data stream over the second communication channel is successful;

30 receiving a request from the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel that the telephone network route the telephone call to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel responsive to the step of

sending a ringing signal to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel;

stopping the sending of the ringing signal to the first telephone subscriber unit over the first communication channel responsive to the step of receiving the request;

5 taking the first telephone subscriber unit off hold responsive to the step of stopping; and

routing the telephone call through the telephone network from the first telephone subscriber unit over the first communication channel to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel responsive to the step of taking the first telephone subscriber unit off hold; and

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performing by the second telephone subscriber unit the steps of:

detecting that the telephone network opened the second communication channel responsive to the step of opening;

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receiving the data stream from the telephone network over the second communication channel responsive to the step of sending the data stream;

determining that the transmission of the data stream over the second communication channel is successful responsive to the step of receiving the data stream;

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responding to the telephone network that the transmission of the data stream over the second communication channel is successful responsive to the step of determining that the transmission of the data stream over the second communication channel is successful;

decoding the data stream to form decoded symbols, representing the caller identification information of the first party, responsive to the step of receiving the data stream;

converting the decoded symbols to speech, representing the caller identification information of the first party, responsive to the step of decoding;

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storing the speech in a subscriber unit memory device responsive to the step of converting the decoded symbols;

receiving the ringing signal from the telephone network over the second communication channel responsive to the step of responding;

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generating the ringing signal responsive to the step of receiving the ringing signal to alert the second party to an availability of the telephone call from the first telephone subscriber unit;

generating the speech responsive to the step of converting the decoded symbols to speech and responsive to the step of generating the ringing signal to permit the second party

associated with the second telephone subscriber unit to listen to the speech to identify an identity of first party associated with the first telephone subscriber unit prior to accepting the telephone call;

5 receiving a request from the second party to accept the telephone call responsive to the step of generating the speech;

requesting that the telephone network route the telephone call from the first telephone subscriber unit over the first communication channel to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel responsive to the step of receiving the request from the second party to accept the telephone call; and

10 receiving the telephone call over the second communication channel responsive to the step of requesting and responsive to the step of routing.

34. A method according to claim 33 further comprising the step of:

15 converting, by the telephone network, the text information from a first data format to a second data format suitable for text-to-speech synthesis prior to the step of converting the text information into symbols.

35. A method according to claim 33 wherein the decoded symbols are represented by phonemic and prosodic information.

20 36. A method according to claim 33 wherein the decoded symbols are represented by spectral and prosodic feature parameters.

25 37. A telephone network coupled to a first telephone subscriber unit and a second telephone subscriber unit, the first telephone subscriber unit having a first telephone number and associated with a first party by the telephone network, and the second telephone subscriber unit having a second telephone number and associated with a second party by the telephone network, the telephone network comprising:

30 a central telephone office for performing a step of receiving a telephone call from the first telephone subscriber unit to the telephone network over a first communication channel responsive to the first telephone subscriber unit originating the telephone call to the second telephone subscriber unit through the telephone network;

a service control point, coupled to the central telephone office, for performing a step of determining that the second party subscribes to a speech-based caller identification service provided by the telephone network responsive to the step of receiving the telephone call;

5 a network services node, coupled to the central telephone office and the service control point, for performing steps of:

retrieving text information, representing caller identification information of the first party, from a database stored in a network memory device responsive to the step of determining;

10 converting the text information into symbols, representing the caller identification information of the first party, responsive to the step of retrieving; and

encoding the symbols to form a data stream representing the caller identification information of the first party;

wherein the central telephone office further performs steps of:

15 opening a second communication channel between the telephone network and the second telephone subscriber unit responsive to the step of encoding; and

sending the data stream from the telephone network to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel responsive to the step of opening.

38. A telephone network coupled to a first telephone subscriber unit and a second telephone subscriber unit, the first telephone subscriber unit having a first telephone number and associated with a first party by the telephone network, and the second telephone subscriber unit having a second telephone number and associated with a second party by the telephone network, the telephone network comprising:

20 means for performing a step of receiving a telephone call from the first telephone subscriber unit to the telephone network over a first communication channel responsive to the first telephone subscriber unit originating the telephone call to the second telephone subscriber unit through the telephone network;

25 means for performing a step of determining that the second party subscribes to a speech-based caller identification service provided by the telephone network responsive to the step of receiving the telephone call;

30 means for performing a step of retrieving text information, representing caller identification information of the first party, from a database stored in a network memory device responsive to the step of determining;

means for performing a step of converting the text information into symbols, representing the caller identification information of the first party, responsive to the step of retrieving;

5 means for performing a step of encoding the symbols to form a data stream representing the caller identification information of the first party;

means for performing a step of opening a second communication channel between the telephone network and the second telephone subscriber unit responsive to the step of encoding; and

10 means for performing a step of sending the data stream from the telephone network to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel responsive to the step of opening.

39. A second telephone subscriber unit, a telephone network being coupled to a first telephone subscriber unit and the second telephone subscriber unit, the first telephone subscriber unit having a first telephone number and associated with a first party by the telephone network, and the second telephone subscriber unit having a second telephone number and associated with a second party by the telephone network, the second telephone subscriber unit comprising:

a central telephone interface module for performing steps of:

20 detecting that the telephone network opened a second communication channel between the telephone network and the second telephone subscriber unit responsive to a step of opening a first communication channel between a first telephone subscriber unit and the telephone network as performed by the telephone network; and

25 receiving a data stream, representing caller identification information of the first party, from the telephone network over the second communication channel responsive to a step of sending the data stream to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel as performed by the telephone network;

a processor for performing steps of:

30 decoding the data stream to form decoded symbols, representing the caller identification information of the first party, responsive to the step of receiving the data stream; and

converting the decoded symbols to speech, representing the caller identification information of the first party, responsive to the step of decoding; and

an electroacoustic transducer for performing a step of generating the speech responsive to the step of converting the decoded symbols to speech to permit the second party associated with the second telephone subscriber unit to listen to the speech to identify an identity of first party associated with the first telephone subscriber unit prior to accepting a telephone call from the first telephone subscriber unit.

40. A second telephone subscriber unit, a telephone network being coupled to a first telephone subscriber unit and the second telephone subscriber unit, the first telephone subscriber unit having a first telephone number and associated with a first party by the telephone network, and the second telephone subscriber unit having a second telephone number and associated with a second party by the telephone network, the second telephone subscriber unit comprising:

means for performing a step of detecting that the telephone network opened a second communication channel between the telephone network and the second telephone subscriber unit responsive to a step of opening a first communication channel between a first telephone subscriber unit and the telephone network as performed by the telephone network;

means for performing a step of receiving a data stream, representing caller identification information of the first party, from the telephone network over the second communication channel responsive to a step of sending the data stream to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel as performed by the telephone network;

means for performing a step of decoding the data stream to form decoded symbols, representing the caller identification information of the first party, responsive to the step of receiving the data stream; and

means for performing a step of converting the decoded symbols to speech, representing the caller identification information of the first party, responsive to the step of decoding; and

means for performing a step of generating the speech responsive to the step of converting the decoded symbols to speech to permit the second party associated with the second telephone subscriber unit to listen to the speech to identify an identity of first party associated with the first telephone subscriber unit prior to accepting a telephone call from the first telephone subscriber unit.

41. In a telephone network coupled to a first telephone subscriber unit and a second telephone subscriber unit, the first telephone subscriber unit having a first telephone number and associated with a first party by the telephone network, and the second telephone subscriber unit having a second telephone number and associated with a second party by the telephone network, the telephone network including a central telephone office for performing a step of receiving a telephone call from the first telephone subscriber unit to the telephone network over a first communication channel responsive to the first telephone subscriber unit originating the telephone call to the second telephone subscriber unit through the telephone network, the telephone network including a service control point for performing a step of determining that the second party subscribes to a speech-based caller identification service provided by the telephone network responsive to the step of receiving the telephone call, an article in the telephone network comprising:

a computer-readable data storage medium;

means recorded on the computer-readable data storage medium for performing a step of retrieving text information, representing caller identification information of the first party, from a database stored in a network memory device responsive to the step of determining;

means recorded on the computer-readable data storage medium for performing a step of converting the text information into symbols, representing the caller identification information of the first party, responsive to the step of retrieving; and

means recorded on the computer-readable data storage medium for performing a step of encoding the symbols to form a data stream representing the caller identification information of the first party;

wherein the central telephone office further performing steps of:

opening a second communication channel between the telephone network and the second telephone subscriber unit responsive to the step of encoding; and

sending the data stream from the telephone network to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel responsive to the step of opening.

42. In a second telephone subscriber unit, a telephone network being coupled to a first telephone subscriber unit and the second telephone subscriber unit, the first telephone subscriber unit having a first telephone number and associated with a first party by the telephone network, and the second telephone subscriber unit having a second telephone number and associated with a second party by the telephone network, an article in the second telephone subscriber unit comprising:

a computer-readable data storage medium;

means recorded on the computer-readable data storage medium for performing a step of detecting that the telephone network opened a second communication channel between the telephone network and the second telephone subscriber unit responsive to a step of opening a first communication channel between a first telephone subscriber unit and the telephone network as performed by the telephone network;

means recorded on the computer-readable data storage medium for performing a step of receiving a data stream, representing caller identification information of the first party, from the telephone network over the second communication channel responsive to a step of sending the data stream to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel as performed by the telephone network;

means recorded on the computer-readable data storage medium for performing a step of decoding the data stream to form decoded symbols, representing the caller identification information of the first party, responsive to the step of receiving the data stream; and

means recorded on the computer-readable data storage medium for performing a step of converting the decoded symbols to speech, representing the caller identification information of the first party, responsive to the step of decoding; and

means recorded on the computer-readable data storage medium for providing the speech to an electroacoustic transducer that performs a step of generating the speech responsive to the step of converting the decoded symbols to speech to permit the second party associated with the second telephone subscriber unit to listen to the speech to identify an identity of first party associated with the first telephone subscriber unit prior to accepting a telephone call from the first telephone subscriber unit.

43. A second telephone subscriber unit forming a cordless telephone subscriber unit, a telephone network being coupled to a first telephone subscriber unit and the second telephone subscriber unit, the first telephone subscriber unit having a first telephone number and associated with a first party by the telephone network, and the second telephone subscriber unit having a second telephone number and associated with a second party by the telephone network, the second telephone subscriber unit comprising:

a cordless handset;

a cordless base station unit adapted to communicate radio frequency signals with the cordless handset and including:

a central telephone interface module for performing steps of:

detecting that the telephone network opened a second communication channel between the telephone network and the second telephone subscriber unit responsive to a step, performed by the first telephone subscriber unit, of initiating a telephone call to the second telephone subscriber unit through the telephone network thereby causing the telephone network to open a first communication channel between a first telephone subscriber unit and the telephone network; and

receiving a data stream, representing caller identification information of the first party, from the telephone network over the second communication channel responsive to a step, performed by the telephone network, of sending the data stream to the second telephone subscriber unit over the second communication channel;

a processor, electrically coupled to the central telephone interface module and provided with one of the cordless handset and the cordless base station unit, for performing steps of:

decoding the data stream to form decoded symbols, representing the caller identification information of the first party, responsive to the step of receiving the data stream; and

converting the decoded symbols to a speech signal, representing the caller identification information of the first party, responsive to the step of decoding; and

an electroacoustic transducer, provided with at least one of the cordless handset and the cordless base station unit, for performing a step of converting the speech signal into acoustic speech responsive to the step of converting to permit the second party associated with the second telephone subscriber unit to listen to the acoustic speech to identify an identity of first party associated with the first telephone subscriber unit in real time prior to accepting the telephone call from the first telephone subscriber unit.

44. A second telephone subscriber unit according to claim 43 wherein the electroacoustic transducer further comprises at least one of:

- 5 a loudspeaker provided with the cordless base station unit;
a loudspeaker provided with the cordless handset; and
an earpiece speaker provided with the cordless handset.

45. A second telephone subscriber unit according to claim 44 wherein the processor performs a step of determining a proximity of the cordless handset to the cordless base station unit, performs a step of causing the loudspeaker provided with the cordless base station unit to generate the acoustic signal responsive to a determination that the cordless handset is proximate to the cordless base station unit, performs a step of preventing one of the loudspeaker and the earpiece speaker of the cordless handset from generating the acoustic signal responsive to the determination that the cordless handset is proximate to the cordless base station unit, and performs a step of causing one of the loudspeaker and the earpiece speaker of the cordless handset to generate the acoustic signal responsive to a determination that the cordless handset is not proximate to the cordless base station unit.

46. A second telephone subscriber unit according to claim 45 wherein the processor determines the proximity of the cordless handset to the cordless base station unit is determined by at least one of:

- 20 mechanical interaction between the cordless handset and the cordless base station unit;
and
electrical signal transmission between the cordless handset and the cordless base station
25 unit.

47. A second telephone subscriber unit according to claim 45 wherein the proximity of the cordless handset to the cordless base station unit is one of a fixed distance and a variable distance, wherein the fixed distance is set by a manufacturer of the second telephone subscriber unit, and wherein the variable distance is set by a user of the second telephone subscriber unit.

48. A second telephone subscriber unit according to claim 44 wherein the processor performs a step of determining that the cordless handset is either turned off or has a low battery power thereby lacking enough electrical energy for the loudspeaker or the earpiece speaker of the cordless handset to generate the acoustic signal, and performs a step of causing the loudspeaker provided with the cordless base station unit to generate the acoustic signal responsive to the step of determining.